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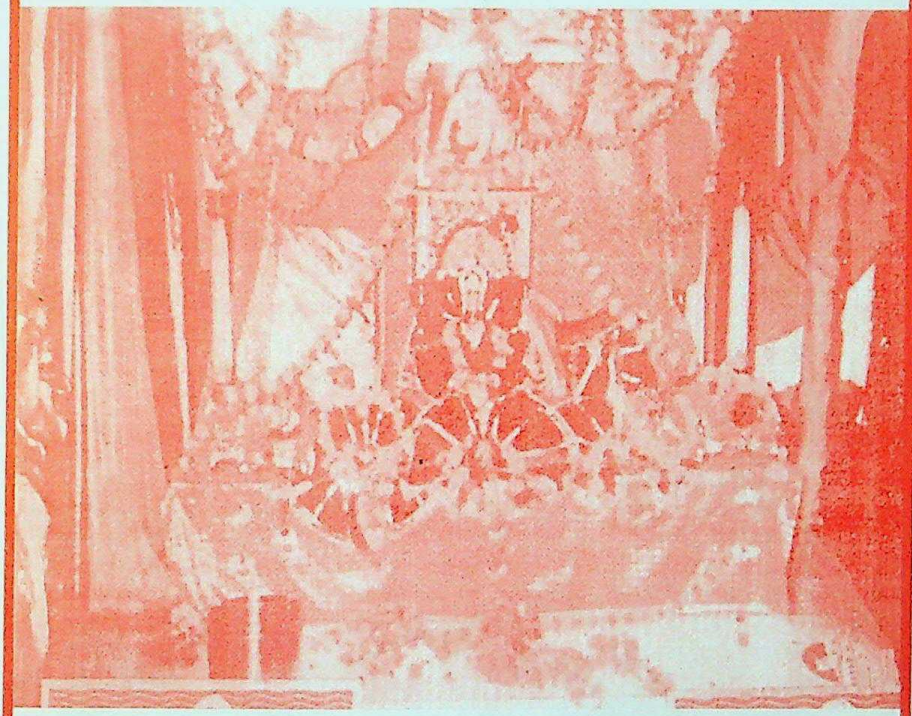
॥ ॐ श्री सीतारामाभ्यां नमः ॥

SRI RAM TEMPLE MOVEMENT



Sri Ram Lala

॥ श्री रामचन्द्रं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

Dr. M.K. Teng & C.L. Gadoo

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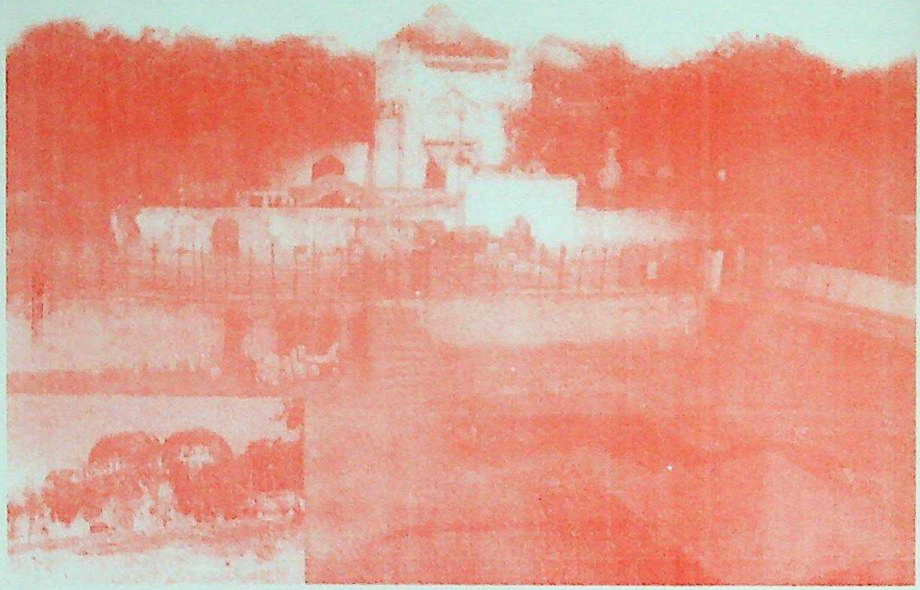

Babri Masjid constructed on the demolished Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi Temple

हरि अनन्त हरिकथा अनन्ता ।
कहहिं सुनंहि बहुविधि सब सन्ता ।।

सुफल मनोरथ होहु तुम्हारे ।
रामु लखनु सुनि भए सुखारे ।।

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SRI RAM TEMPLE MOVEMENT

Sri Ram is the embodiment of the Hindu Dharma. The incarnation of Vishnu. Sri Ram is the universal, the absolute and timeless virtue. He is the Maryada Purshotam, the unified field of cosmic forces, within as well as beyond the percetible reality. Historically the incarnation is an inseparable part of the Hindu civilisation.

Hinduism is a way of worship, devotion and duty. The Hindu spiritual experience is the expression of the civilisation extending across an incredible long time scale and spread over an unbelieveable geographical expanse. It transcends all value-relativism. Therefore, it does not recognise heresy, nor does it sanction inquistion. In Sri Ram, are personified worship, devotion and duty.

For thousands of years, the tradition of worshipping Sri Ram, as the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, has prevailed in India. The earliest known incription to testify this, is found in the Nasik Cave Inscriptions dating back to 150 AD. The evolution of the tradition of Sri Ram from 300 AD, onwards is established by the early shrines surviving at the ancient Ramagiri Hills, 30 Kms from Nagpur. Paintings depicting episodes of Sri Ram's life adorn the walls of numerous temples in India and outside India, from the famous Deogarh Temples in District Jhansi (Uttar Pradesh) to Angkor Vat in Cambodia. The Grand Palace in Bangkok has a pictorial depiction of the complete Ramayana on the inner side of its compound wall.

Sri Ram took his birth in the home of King Dhasrat by his own will. His incarnation is a historical reality. Ramayana is not an epic. It is the expression of a historical tradition in the form of an epic. It has been translated in almost in all languages of our country and in many foreign languages. There is a hardly any folk tradition which does not include the life and legend of Sri Ram. In her famous "Many Ramayanas" Paula Richman, a world renowned scholar of south Indian religious history, discribes the numrous living traditions of the Ramayana, which are still extant in India and other parts of the world. Valmiki, a great Rishi and a great astronomer was the first seer to narrate Sri Ram's life in the Ramayana. He has recorded

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in Bal Kand "Sarga 19" and Shloka eight and nine that Sri Ram was born on ninth 'tithi' of Chairtra month when the position of different planets in zodiac and Nakshatras were; (i) Sun in Aries; (ii) Saturn in Libra; (iii) Jupiter in Cancer; (iv) Venus in Pisces; (v) Mars in Capricorn; (vi) Lunar month of Chaitra; (vii) Ninth day after no moon: (viii) Lagna as Cancer; (ix) Moon in Gemini and the time of the day, around noon. This data was fed into latest computer software. The results indicated that this was exactly the location of planets/stars on the noon of January 10,5114 BC. Thus Sri Ram was born on January 10,5114 BC (7117 years back). According to the Indian calender, it was the ninth day of Shukla Paksha of Chaitra month, that Sri Ram was born in the afternoon. This is exactly the time and date when Ram Navmi is celebrated all over India. All planetary positions narrated by Maharishi Valmiki at different events in Sri Ram's life, have stood the test of the times. Indian history has recorded that Sri Ram belonged to the Suryavansh and he was the 64th ruler of Ayodhya of his dynasty. Professor Subhash Kak of Lousiana University, in his book, The Astronomical Code of the Rig Veda, has also listed 63 ancestors of Sri Ram, King Dashratha, King Aja, King Raghu, King Dilip and their predecessors.

For millions of Hindus all over the world, Ayodhya is the birthplace of Sri Ram. Therefore, the Hindus have deepest devotion and reverance for the place. Ayodhya is situated on the banks of river Saryu. It is one of the oldest cities of the world. Valmiki Ramayana describes it as a prosperous city with high buildings comparable to Amaravathi, the celestial city of the Gods. For Hindus, Ayodhya is the first among the eight holy cities of India; Mathura, Haridwar, Varanasi, Kanchi, Ujjain, Jagannath Puri and Dwaraka, which are believed to give salvation to their inhabitants. The great Saint, poet Tulsidas Ji commenced the writting of "Sri Ram Charit Manas" in Ayodaya, in 1574.

Bharat, after whom our country is named and the truthful king, Harish Chandra, are some great people who belonged to Ayodhya. It is also the birthplace of Bhagwan Rishabhdevji, the first Tirthankar of Jains, besides being the birthplace of four other Tirthankars. They are Ajit Nath, Abhinandan Nath, Suruati Nath and Anant Nath. In fact, Anant Chaturdashi is celebrated to worship Anant Nath. Anant Chaturdeshi is observed solemnly by the Hindus of Kashmir, the people who Sanskritrised the Himalayas and the

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great regions of Central Asia, from the Amu Darya, to Mangolia. Ayodhya, is known as Vishakha in Jain religious texts. There are two important Jain shrines in Ayodhya. Gautam Buddha also lived in Ayodhya. It is said that during the rule of his father, King Shuddodhana, Ayodhya was called Saket. It was one of the most prominent pilgrim centres after Shravasti, the capital of Koshal. People still make references to Dautun Kund in Ayodhya which was the Buddha Kund where Buddha meditated. Sacred Buddhist places like Kushinagar, Sarnath and Shravasti too were a part of the Avadh province.

Gurudwara Brahm Kund Sahib in Ayodhya has great importance for the Sikhs. Guru Nanak Dev Ji came here in Samvat 1557, when he was travelling from Haridwar to Puri and preached on the banks of Saryu. About 170 years later, Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh ji repulsed the attack of Aurangzeb's armies in Ayodhya.

Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi temple was renovated and rebuilt several times over the centuries, before it was reconstructed by King Vikramaditya. It withstood the ravages of the time untill the invasion of Mughal Emperor Babar, who destroyed it in 1528, and converted it into Babri Masjid. Babar, won the first battle of Panipat in 1526, AD and established his supermacy over the North of India. Then he marched to Ayodhaya. Babar ordered the demolition of Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi temple in deference to the wishes of Fakir Kaza Abbas Kalandar. The Fakir ordained that Babar build a mosque in place of the temple. Babar's general, Mir Baqi attacked Ayodhya with a huge army. Mir Baqi faced stiff resistance from the Hindus but he overcame it, and captured the temple and razed it to ground.

The British historian, Cunningham recorded in the 36th issue of the Lucknow Gazette : " A fierce battle was fought and the temple was captured only after one lakh and seventy thousand Hindus laid down their lives. Later Babar, himself conceded a portion of the temple to the Hindus. But the Hindus were not satisfied, which led to an eventual ban on the entry of Hindus into the temple."

Encyclopedia Britanica makes a mention of the destruction of the Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi temple. "Rama's birth place", the Encyclopedia notes, " is now marked by a mosque erected by the Mughal emperor Babar in 1528 AD on the site of an earlier temple".

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That the capture of Ayodhya was accompanied by mass massacre of the Hindus, was noted by a British Officer, Hamilton in the District Gazetteer of Barabanki. Hamilton noted that in consequence of the mass scale killings of the Hindus their blood was mixed with mud and mortar used for the construction of the Babri Masjid.

Hamilton's descriptions was based upon the tradition handed down from generation to generation and there is hardly any reason to doubt its veracity.

Demolition of Hindu Temples

There is enough evidence recorded by the contemprorary Muslim chronicles and British historians about the destruction of the Hindu temples and shrines by the Muslim invaders as well as emperors, who estalished their dynasties to rule India. Muslim historians wrote of the demolition of the Hindu temples during Gaznavi's invasion of India. "In Banaras which is the centre of the country of Hind they destroyed the thousand temples and raised Mosques on their foundations." Surat-i-Feruz Shah recorded: " Firoz Tughlak attacked Orissa in 1360 AD and destroyed the temple of Jaganath."

In ~~1931~~ 1391, Nasirudin Mohamad Tughlak Sultan sent Muzaffar Shah Khan to destroy the famous temple of Somnath. He demolished the temple and built a mosque over the foundations of the demolished temple. The temple had been rebuilt by the Hindus after it was pillaged by Gaznavi's hordes. Muzaffar Khan succeeded Nasirurdin Mohammad after the latter's demise in 1393. Auranzeb's grand-daughter and the daughter of Bahadur Shah Alamqir, noted in Safiha-i-Chahal Nasaih Bahadur Shahi, written and compiled in late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century. "The places of worship of Hindus situated at Mathura, Banaras and Avdh etc. in which the Hindus have great faith, the birth place of Kanahaiya, the place of Rasoi Sita, the place of Hanuman, who according to the Hindus, was seated by Ram Chandra over there, after the conquest of Lanka, were all demolished for the strength of Islam, and at these places mosques have been constructed."

Mohamad Khilji demolished many Hindu temples and built mosques over their ruins. In 1472 AD, Mohamad Begara attacked Dwarka and destroyed the temple of Sri Krishna. In Hadiqa-i-Shahada (1856) Mirza Jan wrote: "The past Sultans encouraged

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the propagation and glorification of Islam and crushed the forces of the unbelievers, the Hindus. Similarly, Faizabad and Avdh were also purged of the unworthy practice of Kufr. Avdh was a great worshipping centre of the capital of Kingdom of Ram's father." Illyas Shah demolished and destroyed Hindu temples all over South India. Laltaditya A.D. 761, founded the Karkota empire of Kashmir. He extended his power into the upper Punjab in the south and west of India and western Tibet in the north. He built many magnificant temples in Kashmir, the most imposing of them being the temple of Martand. After him, king Avantivarman built two temples, Avanti-Swamin dedicated to Vishnu, and Avanti-Swara dedicated to Shiva. His son Sankara Varman built two elegant temples at Pattan, both dedicated to Shiva. During the reign of the Muslim Sultan Sikandar known as iconoclast, most of the Hindu temples were destroyed. The temple of Martand was reduced to ruins. The task of destroying the remaining temples was accompolished by Sikander's successors. The destruction of the Hindu temples in Kashmir continued unchecked during the Chak rule, which followed the Shahmiri Sultanate, the Mughals., who wrested Kashmir from the Chaks and the Durrain Pathans, who followed the Mughals. W.R. Lawrence wrote: "After destroying most of their temples, Sikandar turned his attention to the people, who worshipped there and he offered them three choices: death, conversion or exile..... Tradition affirms that only eleven families of the Hindus remained in Kashmir."

The demolition of the temples by the Muslims was aimed to extend the Muslim power to India and to facilitate the spread of Islam. The construction of mosques over the remains of the demolished temples, was aimed to prove to the Hindus that they were beyond redemption and thus pave the way for the destruction of Hinduism. A mosque was built by Sultan Qutub-din-Aibak in 1193, AD and named "Quwwatul-Islam Masjid." The mosque was rennovated and enlarged by Shamsuddin Iltimush in 1211-36 AD and Alauddin Khilji in 1216-1316. Quwwatul-Islam masjid symbolised the might of Islam. Pillars and the stone slabs of, as many as twenty seven Hindu and Jain temples, demolished by the Muslim rulers, were used in the construction of the mosque. The mosque is still intact, standing in the enclosure of the Qutub Minar in Delhi.

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The historian, scholar and Nobel Laureate Vidiadhar S. Naipaul was interviewed by Shri Dilip Padgaonkar, Shri Rahul Singh, of the (The Times of India), Shri Sadanad Menon of the (The Hindu) and others, Naipaul told them:

"What is happening in India is a new, historical awakening... only now are the people begining to understand that there has been a great vandalising of India." He added; "I think when you see so many Hindu temples of the tenth century or earlier time disfigured, and defaced, you know that they were not just defaced for fun, that something terrible happened. I feel that the civilisation of that closed world was mortally wounded by those invasions. And I would like people, as it were, to be more reverential towards the past, to try to understand it, to preserve it, instead of living in its ruins. The old world is destroyed. That has to be understood. The ancient HIndu India was destroyed."

"In Ayodhya, the construction of a mosque on a spot regarded as sacred by the conquered population was meant as an insult. It was meant as an insult to an ancient idea, the idea of Ram, which was two or three thousand years old."

Summing up what the Mohammedan invasion of India meant in history, Will Durant an American historian, 1885-1981, The Story of Civilization, Vol. I our Oriental Heritage P.459), worte, "The Mohammedan conquest of India is probablly the bloodiest story in history, a discouraging tale, for its evident moral is that civilisation is a precisous thing whose delicate complex of order and liberty, culture and peace may at any time be overthrown by barbarians".

Sir Arnold Toynbee, one of great British historians, while delivering the Azad Memorial Lecture in 1960, said:-

"As I have been speaking, some vivid visual memories have been flashing up in my minds eye. One of these is a mental picture of principal square in the Polish city of Warsaw some time in the late nineteen twenties. In the course of the first Russain occupation of Warsaw (1614-1915), the Russians had built an Eastern Orthodox Cathedral on this central spot in the city that had been the capital of the once independent Roman catholic Christian country, Poland. The Russians had done this to give the Poles a continuous ocular

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demonstration that the Russains were now their masters. After the re-establishment of Poland's independance in 1918, the Poles had pulled this cathedra down. The demolition had been completed just before the date of my visit. I do not greatly blame the Polish Government for having pulled down that Russain Church. The purpose for which the Russains had built it had been not religous but political and the purpose had also been intentionally offensive. On the other hand, I do greatly praise the Indian Government for not having pulled down Aurangzeb's Mosque. I am thinking particularly of two that overlook the Ghats at Banaras and one that crowns Krishna's hill at Mathura". Toynbee continued : "Aurangzeb's purpose in building those three Mosques was the same intentionally offensive political pupose that moved the Russians to build their Orthodox Cathedral in the city centre at Warsaw. Those three Mosques were intended to signify that an Islamic Government was reigning supreme, even over Hinduism's holiest of holy places. I must say that Aurangzeb had a veritable genius for picking out provocative sites. Aurangzeb and Philip II of Spain are a pair. They are incarnations of the gloomly fantical vein in the Christian - Muslim - Jewish family of religions. Aurangzeb - a poor wretched misguided bad man spent a lifetime of hard labour in raising massive monuments to his own discredit".

V.A. Smith, wrote about the destruction of the holy city of Mathura, the birthplace of Sri Krishna; "Sultan (Mahmud) was of the opinion that 200 years would have been required to build it. The idols included, five red gold, each five yards high with eyes formed of priceless jewels. The Sultan gave orders that all temples should be burnt with naphtha and fire, and levelled with ground. Thus perished works of art, which must have been among the noblest monuments of ancient India "(One World and India, compiled by the National Book Trust page 59-61).

RECLAMATION

The struggle of the Hindus to reclaim the Ram Janam Bhoomi commenced with the demolition of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya by Mir Baqi. For the Hindus the construction of the Babri Masjid, marked a catastrophic event. The civilsational overlap signified a far deeper and wider conflict, than it appeared to be. Babar expressed ecstasy on the destruction of the Ram temple as

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noted in Babar Nama. "For Islam's sake", he exclaimed, "I wondered in the wilds, prepared for war with Pagans and Hindus, resolved myself to meet the martyres death, thanks be to God, a Ghazi I bacame."

It is believed that in the struggle for the reclamation of Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi hundreds of thousands of Hindus lost their lives, seventy seven attempts were recorded to have been made by the Hindus to recover Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi from the Muslims. During Akbar's reign, Swami Balram Dhari of Coimbatore, raised an army of Hindu youth and mounted twenty attacks to liberate the temple between 1556 and 1560:

RAM CHABUTRA

During the reign of the Mughal emperor Akbar, the Hindus built the Ram Chabutra and rebuilt Sita Ki Rasoi. Ram Chabutra was built near the structure that housed the Garbhagriha, the Sanctum, Sanctorum of the Ram Mandir destroyed by Babar. Evidently, the Hindus were unable to reconcile themselves to the destruction of the Ram temple and their eviction from the Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi, where they had worshipped Sri Ram from time immemorial. Incontrovertible evidence is present that the Hindus celebrated Ram Navmi at the Ram Chabutra as well as under the domed structure in defiance of the efforts of the Moghul Kings. They could not fight the Mughal Sultanate, they defied its authority.

In 1767, an Austrian Jesuite traveller Joseph Tiefenthailer, noted that the Hindus had re-occupied the courtyard and raised the Ram Chabutra inspite of the Moghul Kings efforts to prevent them. He found that the Hindus worshipped Sri Ram, at the Ram Chabutra as well as under the domed structure. A British scholar Edward Thoronton, corroborated the observations of Tiefenthailer in 1854. He recorded in the Gazetteer of Territories under the Government of the East India Company, that the Hindus worshipped Sri Ram at the Ram Chabutra and celebrated Ram Navmi there. This adjustment went on till Aurangzeb's time when the Mughal army invaded Ayodhya and the platform and the temple were razed to ground. Aurangzeb wrote in his "Alamgir Nama" that ten thousand Hindus were killed in that battle alone.

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During the British rule, the Hindus attempted to invoke the judicial remedies the new civil code, introduced by the British in India provided, to recover Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi. Mahant Raghubardasji appealed to Faizabad Distirct Judge that order be given for the construction of a temple on the Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi. On 18th March 1886, the District Judge, an Englishman, passed the following order: " I visited the land in dispute yesteday, in the presence of all parties. I found that the Masjid built by Emperor Babar stands on the border of Ayodhya, that is to say, to the west and south. It is clear of habitants. It is most unfortunate that a Masjid should have been built on land specially held sacred by the Hindus, but, as that event occured 356 years ago, it is too late now to agree with the grievances. All that can be done is to maintain the party in status quo."

In 1934, a very serious Hindu-Muslim armed encounter took place in and around Babri Masjid, over an incident involving cow-slaughter in which many people were killed and the domes of the mosques were damaged. After the incident the authorities repaired the domes, and closed the Mosque. The British Government recovered the cost of repairs to the mosque by a punative fine imposed on the Hindus. No 'Nemaz' was offered in the Babri Mosque after 1934. Milestones in Ayodhya area were fixed by the British in 1934, in all, there were 36 milestones with commemorative inscriptions. On the first of these milestones, installed at the Babri mosque, was inscribed 'Janam Bhoomi'.

INDEPENDENCE OF INDIA

During the year 1949, on the night of 22nd and 23rd December, the idol of Sri Ram appeared inside the main structure of the mosque, which had remained locked since 1934. On 16th January, 1950, Shri Gopal Singh Visharad and Paramhans Ramchandera Das filed two civil suits in the city civil court of Faizabad for injuction, against removing the idol and performances of the pooja. On 19th January, 1950, an interim injuction was granted by an order dated March, 1951, the temporary injection was confirmed. A blanket order, prohibiting the removal of the idol granting the petitioner's right to offer worship before the deity was granted.

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Soon after Independence, the ancient temple of Somnath, which was ravaged, looted and ransacked repeatedly by invaders from Sultan Ghaznavi to Aurangzeb, was rebuilt. Sardar Patel, the then Deputy Prime Minsiter and Home Minister of India, who was mainly responsible for re-building the Somnath temple declared: "The Hindu sentiment in regard to the temple is both strong and widespread. In the present conditions it is unlikely that the sentiments will be satisfied by mere restoration of the temple or by prolonging its life. The restoration of the idol would be a point of honour and sentiment with the Hindu public."

A public statement was made by another former Home Minister of India, Dr. Kailash Nath Katju that in the interests of promoting Hindu-Muslim accord in India, the Muslims must voluntarily hand over Muslim shrines that had been raised on the sites of Vishwa Nath Temple in Kashi, Ram Janam Bhoomi Temple in Ayodhya and Krishna Janam Bhoomi in Mathura.

During September 1961, two eminent Indian Parliamentarians, Shri Prakash Vir Shastri and Shri Balraj Madhok, raised the issue of Ram Janam Bhoomi in Lok Sabha. Prof. Madhok while addressing the Lok Sabha members referred to Kashmiri Pandits who worshipped the foundation of a great temple which was destroyed during the period of the Muslim Sultanate at the behest of Shah Hamdan. A mosque, known after Shah Hamdan, was built on the foundation of temple. Kashmiri Pandits still worship the riverside edifice of stonework on which the foundation of the temple was laid.

In Decmber 1961, the U.P. Sunni Central Board of Waqfs filed a suit in Civil Court of Faizabad, whether the disputed structure was Waqfs property. On 26th April, 1966, the court held: "No notification under Section 5(i) of the Muslim Waqf Act No. XIII of 1936, was ever made relating to the specific disputed property of the present suits and the alleged Government Gazetteer notification did not comply with the requirements of the valid notification in the eyes of law and serves no useful purpose of the plantiff of the leading case".

The litigations initiated by the Hindus in 1950, and ten years later in 1959, and the Waqf Board suit filed in 1961, were not settled

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by the courts. The Hindu Sants gradually lost hope in the judiciary to decide the Ram Janam Bhoomi issue. A mass movement was initiated, to reclaim the Ram Janam Bhoomi. In 1964, on 'Janam Ashtami' Vishwa Hindu Parishad was formed by Dharamacharys at Sandepan Ashram.

HINDU SAMMELAN

On 6th March 1983, a virat Hindu Sammelan was organized at Muzzafarnagar. More than a lakh of Hindus participated in the Sammelan and it was resolved that the three holiest of holy places of the Hindus, namely; Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura should be returned to Hindus. On 2nd Febuary, 1984, the Hindu youth under the quidence of Shri Viney Katiyar formed Bajrang Dal at 'Valmiki Bhawan' Ayodhya to strengthen the movement. On 7th and 8th April, 1984, the first 'Dharam Sansad' took place, Five hundred and twentyeight Sants from all over the country participated in the Dharam Sansad. The Sansad unanimously resolved to liberate Ram Janam Bhoomi, Krishan Janam Bhoomi and Kashi Vishav Nath Temple. Shortly after, Sants and Vishwa Hindu Parishad formed the Ram Janam Bhoomi Mukti Yajna Samiti to compaign for the liberation of Ram Janam Bhoomi. On 23rd October 1985, the Ram Janam Bhoomi Mukti Yajna Samiti declared that the Sants would forcibly break open the locks to liberate the Janam Bhoomi if the locks were not removed and the place of worship was not thrown open by 'Shivaratri' day i.e. 8th March, 1986. This ultimatum was repeated on 19th January, 1986, from Lucknow. On 1st Feb., 1986 the District Court, Faizabad, passed an order directing the Government of Uttar Pradesh to open the locks of the disputed structure. The Court further directed that the government should not impose any restriction or creat any hurdle in the Darshan of Sri Ram or Pooja performed by the Hindu community.

With the re-opening of the locks of the disputed structure Rambhakats thronged to the temple and streams of piligrims started pouring in Ayodhya everyday. Meanwhile Vishwa Hindu Parishad approached the Government for the allottment of the sixty acre site, adjacent to Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi, for the construction of a cultural and educational centre.

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ARCHEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

Between the year 1970, and 1980, the Education Ministry of the Government of India drew up a plan to excavate the places of sanctity pertaining to Ramayana and to ascertain the age of Ramayana. The excavation were conducted under the guidance of Prof. B.B. Lal who was at one time the Director of Archaeology in India and enjoyed the reputation of being one of the ten most celebrated and reputed archaeologists of the world. Out of seventeen place for excavation in Ayodhya, Prof. B.B. Lal selected "Janamsthal" as one of the sites for excavation. Deep excavation was carried on the back of the site. Prof. B. B. Lal reported :

1) The foundation stones (Adharastambhs) of the pillars dating back to 10th century to 11th century were found.

2) Fourteen pillars (stambhs) of Black shishtaj Kasauti stones were found fixed up in Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi temple. These foundation stones were in a particular direction. The pillars in Ram Janam Bhoomi temple could be compared with the pillars of the late Pratihar Shailee in temples of Kannuaj built by Gharwal Kings of the 11th century. The pillars and their foundations belonged to 11the century.

On 12th May 1986, the Sunni Waqf Board filed another suit for the cancellation of the order given by the District Judge on 1st Febuary, 1986. But the court refused to intervene. On 1st July, 1989, one of the Vice Presidents of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad filed an application on behalf of 'Ramlala' and the Court declared the Vice President of Vishwa Hindu Parishad as the next friend (guardian) of the deity at Ayodhya. All suits were transferred to the High Court in July, 1989. In November 1989 the full Bench of the Allahabad High Court held that, "it is doubtful that some of the questions involved in the suit are soluble by judicial process."

On 14th February 1986, the Muslims observed a black day in order to express their resentment against the opening of the locks of the Babri structure. Anti-Hindu riots broke out in South-Kashmir which involved the demolition of fifty five Hindu temples. On 15th February, 1986, the Babri Masjid Action Committee was constituted. On 30th March 1987, a large rally was organised by Babri Masjid Action Committee at the Boat Club in Delhi. Shahi

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Imam of Jama Masjid, Delhi made a highly provocative speech in the rally. Some of the Muslim leaders threatened that they would take recourse to violence in protest against the opening of the Janam Sathan for Darshan. Soon afterwards the Government of India decided to set up a Group of Ministers (GOM) to suggest steps for resolving the issue. The events which took place from 1984, to 1989, reveal that Ayodhya movement had become a sensitive political issue and a mass movement.

In June 1989, the executive meeting of the Bhartiya Janta Party was held at Palampur. A decision was taken in the executive meeting to support the Ayodhya movement and the construction of the Ram Janam Bhoomi temple in Ayodhya. On 8th February 1990, the leaders of the Ayodhya movement met the Indian Prime Minsiter on his invitation. He assured them that the problem would be solved within four months. But nothing happened. On 23-24 June, 1990, the Sants met at Haridwar and decided that Kar Seva for the construction of the temple would start from Devotthan Ekasdasi Day on 30th October, 1990. Bhartiya Janta Party President Shri L.K. Advani announced his plan on 12th September 1990, for a 10,000 Km. Rath Yatra from Somnath to Ayodhya, starting on 25th September 1990, and reaching Ayodhya on 30th October 1990, to join the Kar Seva. The Rath Yatra was a great success and it received tremondous response everywhere. On 30th October, 1990, the Karsevaks, who were approaching Ram Janam Bhoomi, were subjected to ruthless firing. More than 50 Karsevaks died and hundreds were injured. On 30th Sept. 1991. Dr. V.P. Sharma (Advocate) appealed to the High Court (Lucknow Bench) that fresh excavation by Archaeological Department Government of India should be conducted to establish that Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi temple pre-existed on the site where Babri Masjid was constructed. On the 18th June, 1992, when the ground near the Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi was being levelled, a most starting archaeological discovery was made. At a depth of about 12 feet from the ground level, near the Ram Janam Bhoomi temple, towards the south and beyond the fencing, a big hoard of beautifully carved buff sandstone pieces were located in a large pit, dug down below the old top level. The experts, who visited the site on behalf of the academic organisation (The Historian's Forum) on the 2nd and 3rd of July, 1992, were of the unanimous view that the temple to which these fragments

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belonged, was of the developed 'Nagara' form of the ancient temple architecture, which was current in northern India during the period after 900 AD and before 1200 AD. Many more stone sculptures of that period were found at the site. Art objects of burnt clay belonging to the earlier periods, such as the Kushana (1st–3rd century) were also found. These images belong to various Hindu Gods and Goddesses.

There was an attempt to sort out the Ayodhya tangle bilaterly. But the talks between Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Masjid groups failed on 29th October, 1992. It was decided in the 5th Dharam Sansad organised at Delhi on 30th October, 1992, that Kar Seva would be restarted from 6th December, 1992.

DEMOLITION OF BABRI MASJID

In a sudden development on 6th December 1992, the disputed structure was demolished by the Kar Sevaks and Ramlala was re-installed in the place where it had been originally installed. Kar Sevaks wanted to replace the makeshift temple by a permanent temple at Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi.

A few hours after the demolition of the Babri Mosque the Uttar Pradesh, Government was dismissed by the Central Government and the Assembly dissolved. There was tension all over the country. As many as seventy seven temples in Kashmir were desecrated and destroyed. In Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afganistan, Indian Embassies and Hindu and Sikh places of worship were attacked. Government of India told the Indian Parliament that as many as 248 Hindu temples and cultural centres were destroyed in Pakistan, 350 in Bangladesh, 4 in Afganistan and 18 in United Kingdom.

When the Babri Masjid was demolished, many pieces and splinters of artifacts which were embeded in its walls, were recovered from the debris. The artifacts provided unipeachable evidence that the Babri Masjid was built on the remenants of a Hindu temple. They also provided epigraphic evidence, which confirmed that the temple which was destroyed and on which the Babri Mosque was built was a Ram temple, where Sri Ram was worshipped.

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Shri T.P. Verman of Banaras Hindu University issued a press statement in respect of evidences found in debris of the demolished structure at Ayodhya "The antiquities found during the demolition of the disputed structure at Ayodhya on 6 December 1992, have got wide publicity. Beside on idol of Kodanda Rama, about 3 feet high, carved in white marble and painted in black by oil colour, one sculpture of Ganesh and a head of Bhairawa are worth mention. But the most important antiques found, were the three Sanskrit inscriptions written in Nagari script of 11-12th century AD. This incription sets at rest the debate whether there was a temple at the Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi site before the construction of the mosque by Mir Baqi in 1528. This incription is on the foundation stone with a Parashasti, an enulogy of the King who built the temple."

It is important to note that Hindu temples are the abodes of God. They are not prayer houses. In the Hindu temples Param Parmeshwara is worshipped in the forms, He assumed with the evolution of the Sanskrit civilization of India, as the manifestation of the unity of unviersal existence and the embodiment of creation. Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi was worshipped as the abode of the incarnation of Vishnu. The construction of the Muslim mosque over the Ram Temple was therefore, a civilisational overlap.

On 10th May, 1993, a draft petition was presented by Veetraga Swami Vaamdev Ji to the President of India. The petition was drafted by Dharamacharyas. The petition stated, "we are of the definite view that only the temple should be reconstructed at Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi at Ayodhya. A mosque can be built beyond the 'Panchkosi Parikarma' area." A total of ninty seven million seven hundred seventy three thousand and seven hundred fifty three Indian cititzens appended their signatures to the above petition. A total of 281, 272 villages participated in the signature campaign. Among the signatories, as many as 397,388 were Muslims while 119,763 were Christians. Apart from the countrywide signature campaign, the Sant Yatra, Sri Ram Jyoti Yatra, Sri Ram Shila Pujan, the actual Shilanyas by a Harijan and the congregation of hundreds of thousand of Karsevaks, has no parallel in history.

The excavations carried out by Archeologist in Ayodhya, following the directives of the Allahbad High Court from 5 March to 7 August, 2003, clearly proved that not one but three temples existed there, built one after another from the seventh century AD to 12th

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century AD. The Babri Masjid was built after cutting the pillar bases and the floor of the 12th century temple. Apart from 70 pillar bases, over 100 big pieces of temple remains have been found there. Dr. Gupta, the Chairman of the Archeological Survey of India reported that a wide brick wall belonging to a temple of early medival period (8th - 9th century AD) still exists. The wall of 9th century temple had collapsed due to floods in the Saryu and a new temple was built in 12th century.

The findings date back to 1000 BC. with people, who used North Black polished ware. The figurines of female deities and a round signet were found. (1000 to 300 BC). Artefacts of Kushan era were also found. Traces of the classical artistic elements and a copper coin with legend, Sri Chandra Gupta, were also found. (4700 - 6000 AD). Remains of a circular brick shrine similar to Chiranath temple, excavated at Sravasti and to Shiva Temple in Madhya Pradesh (700 -1000 AD) were found at the site. The remains of a fifty meter structure constructed but short lived, were also found at the site. On these remains was built a massive, three floor structure (1100-1200 AD).

The Archological remains found at the site provide adquate evidence that a temple existed at the Janamsthan, which was demolished and on the remains of which, the Babri Masjid was constructed. The official records and references in historical sources, the archological evidence, and the reference in European travelogues, prove beyond doubt, the historicity of the demolition of the Ram temple and the construction of the Babri Masjid over its foundations. The most vital part of the history of the Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi is the race memory of the Hindu society, of its devotion to Sri Ram and the psychological hurt it suffered due to the destruction of the Ram temple at Ayodhya.

Sri Ram took birth in Ayodhya as the incarnation of Sri Vishnu and trod the sacred ground there. History has an intrinsic quality of truth. All logical reductionism is a negation of history and the truth in its womb. The tradition handed down from one generation to another generation of the Hindus who lived and died under the subjection of the Muslim rule, is an inseparable part of the history of the Indian civilisation. The struggle for the reclamation of the Ram Janam Bhoomi is also an inseparable part of the history of the Indian civilisation.

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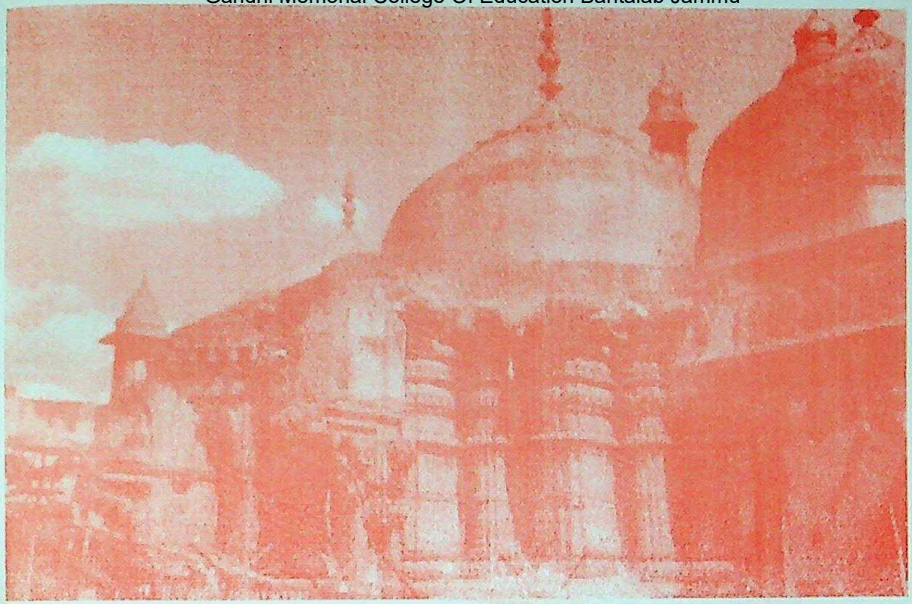
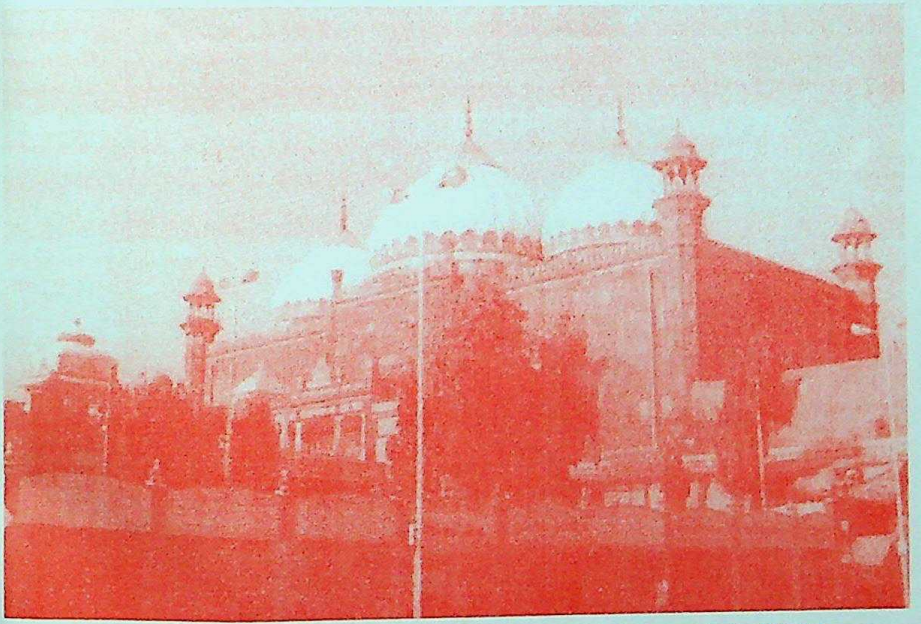


Mosque mounted on half demolished Kashi Viswanath Temple in Varanasi



Idgah built on the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple in Mathura

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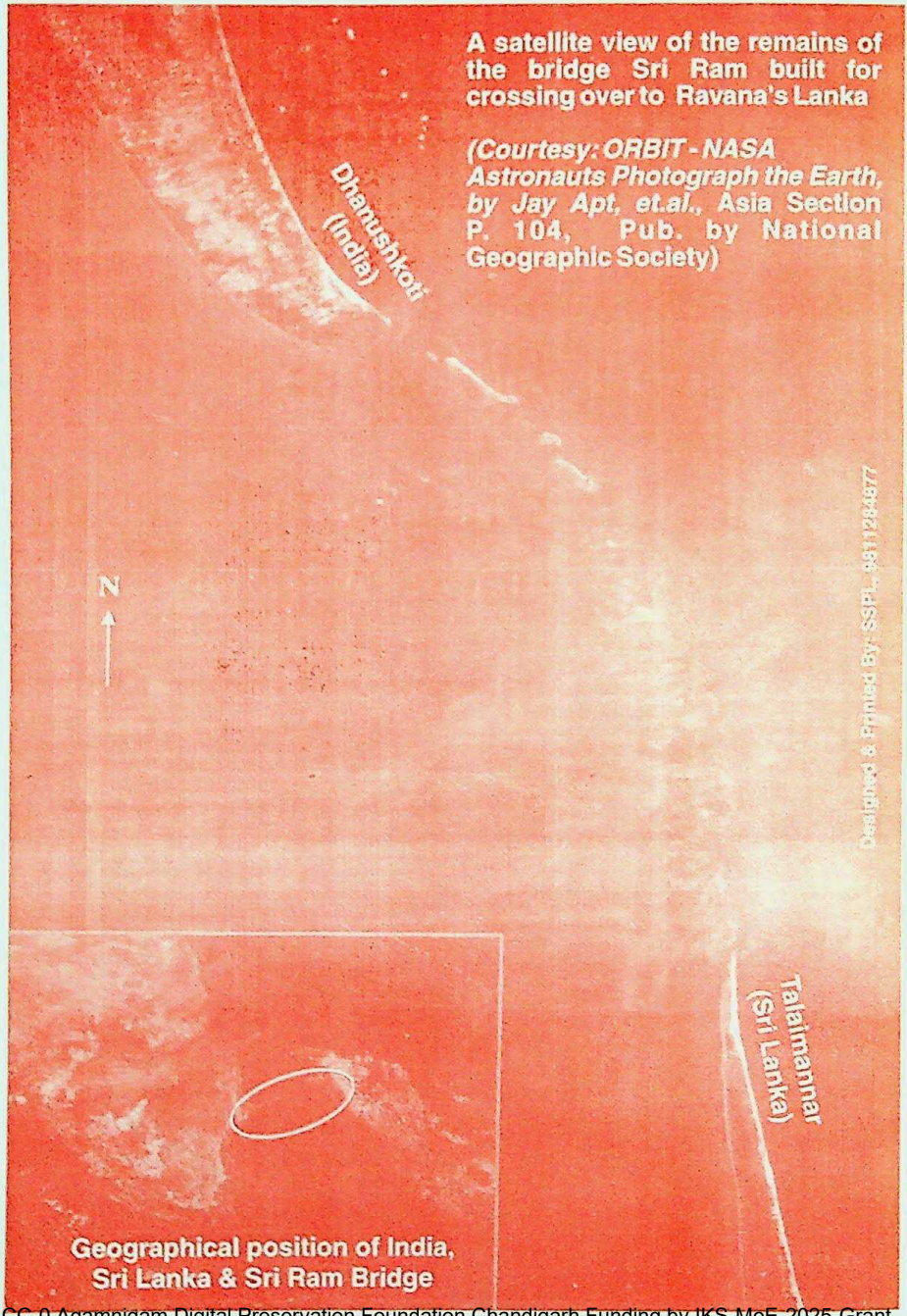

A satellite view of the remains of the bridge Sri Ram built for crossing over to Ravana's Lanka

(Courtesy: ORBIT - NASA Astronauts Photograph the Earth, by Jay Apt, et.al., Asia Section P. 104, Pub. by National Geographic Society)

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